

Federal Budget Update From the Director

The current six-year transportation bill (TEA-21) expired September 30, 2003. Congress has passed a series of extensions to keep business going until a new bill is completed. The most recent extension passed February 27 and runs until April 30. It is hoped that this extension will be adequate in that the Senate has passed its version of the bill and the house is scheduled to do mark-up on its bill on March 3. House members say they will be working to reduce their originally planned \$375 billion reauthorization bill to a level closer to the \$318 billion passed by the Senate (S. 1072). The \$318 billion Senate bill is quite good for North Dakota – about a 35% increase. Until the full authorization passes, state DOT's continue to work under the extension's limitation on funds. The newest extension will give states seven-twelfths of the spending authority granted in 2003 (\$180 million). The recently passed 2004 appropriation provides North Dakota with \$197 million, but that amount cannot be accessed until the new six-year bill is passed. This is causing some concern in knowing what projects to advance for the remainder of North Dakota's 2004 construction season. Congress appears to be working aggressively to complete its reauthorization task and is also negotiating with the administration to address their budget concerns in order to avoid a possible veto by the President.

Initiative 1: Strategically prioritize the use of transportation resources and

Initiative 2: Prioritize use of transportation resources.

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) is proposing a new classification system that will determine the appropriate quality and capacity of all roads on the state system. The five-tier system considers variables such as projected traffic and truck volumes, route continuity, and connections between major destinations and population centers. NDDOT is hosting a series of public input meetings around the state in March to present its proposed Highway Performance Classification System (HPCS). HPCS is a proposal for five levels of highways, investment strategies, and highway performance guidelines. The list of planned meetings is as follows:

Monday, March 1

Wahpeton City Hall, 2 p.m.
 Fargo Kelly Inn, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 2

Park River City Office Building, 1:30 p.m.
 Grand Forks Best Western Townhouse, 7:00 p.m.

Monday, March 8

Stanley 2 Way North (formerly Legion Club), 1:30 p.m.
 Williston Public Library, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 9

Bottineau National Guard Armory, 1:30 p.m.
 Minot City Auditorium, 7 p.m.

Monday, March 15

Ellendale Fireside Lounge, 1:30 p.m.
 Valley City AmericInn, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 16

Rugby, Ottertail Power, 1:30 p.m.
 Devils Lake, Lake Region Community College Auditorium, 7 p.m.

Monday, March 22

Bowman City Hall, 1:30 p.m. MT
 Dickinson City Hall, 7 p.m. MT

Tuesday, March 23

Underwood City Hall 1:30 p.m.
 Bismarck, NDDOT. Rm. 330, 7 p.m.

The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) has classified all 90 North Dakota public-use airports by considering runway lengths, FAA funding, aerial application, and medical access. In 2004, NDAC will update the pavement condition ratings of all 72 paved airports in the state.



Initiative 3: Enhance communication and facilitate cooperation and collaboration. NDAC submitted a three-year capital improvement plan to the FAA on January 29, 2004. In 2003, the state set a record of more than \$23 million for airport improvements with FAA.

Initiative 4: Define and improve the performance of transportation corridors and facilities. NDDOT staff attended meetings with representatives of the Ports-to-Plains, Heartland Express, and US 85 Corridor Coalition. As a result of these meetings, a proposal nominating US 85 and US 83 as “designated priority corridors” has been submitted to the state’s congressional delegation.

NDAC coordinated the global satellite positioning (GPS) approaches at four new airports in 2003 and will coordinate seven in 2004. Also in 2003, military airspace coordination with general aviation and commercial carriers was undertaken, and the airports at Beach, Glen Ullin, Lakota, Washburn, Kindred, and Cooperstown were upgraded in classification. Fargo will reconstruct the major north-south runway in 2004 for total cost of \$25 million, the largest single airport project to be undertaken in the state. Bismarck will finish the new terminal in early 2005.

Initiative 5: Incorporate economic competitiveness in investment strategies. In 2003, Northwest Airlines increased regional jet and air link service to Bismarck, Minot, Grand Forks and Fargo. In early 2004, a third round-trip with regional jets to Denver from Fargo and Bismarck was added; a third round-trip for Williston–Dickinson–Denver is planned for 2004. Allegiant Air has negotiated a Bismarck–Las Vegas three weekday charter service anticipated for mid-year 2004 startup.

Initiative 6: Analyze load limits and establish a program to coordinate administration. Under contract to NDDOT, the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI) is analyzing the economic impacts of load limits and the benefits of establishing a statewide program to coordinate the administration of load limits.

NDAC will consider addressing runway strength as is part of the 2004 pavement study.

Initiative 7: Determine the feasibility of, and identify conditions necessary for, developing an intermodal freight facility or facilities. The City of Minot has contracted with Carter-Burgess Consultants to do an intermodal facility feasibility study, scheduled to be completed in September 2004. In the Cass County/Clay County area, a working group is determining whether to initiate an intermodal study.

Initiative 8: Determine opportunities for regional uniform truck size, weight, and permitting. Under contract to NDDOT, UGPTI studying the opportunities for, and the economic and safety impacts of, a regional (multi-state) uniform truck size, weight, and permitting system.

Initiative 9: Use Intelligent Transportation Systems to enhance performance and safety. NDDOT staff took part in a FHWA-hosted video conference discussing information flow across the border.

In the fall of 2003, NDAC installed new satellite-based weather flight planning stations at the eight commercial airports. Pilots can access real time weather, communicate to FAA on flight plans, and acquire airport condition reports.

Initiative 11: Create programs to facilitate economic development and competitiveness. NDAC will conclude the state airline service study in 2004. The report will include an air service action plan for all eight cities, including demographics, service area regions, and pricing indexes.

NDDOT staff have contacted eight midwestern states and two Canadian provinces to find out what kinds of transportation-related economic development programs are in place. NDDOT issued a report to the Director's Advisory Council on Dec. 18, 2003.

Initiative 12: Promote public/private partnerships. NDDOT staff attended a presentation on public/private partnerships made by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. A briefing was made to the Director's Advisory Council on Dec. 18, 2003.



Initiative 13: Participate in regional and national transportation studies and programs. NDDOT Director Dave Sprynczynatyk has been named as Governor Hoeven's alternate on the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority, which develops programs and plans to improve the regional economy. Congress has appropriated \$1.5 million to the Authority for the current fiscal year.

In the area of aviation, businesses routinely donate funds to local airports to raise a 5 percent local match, and also donate personnel to remove snow at smaller general aviation airports. Airlines and airports cooperatively match marketing funds to prevent migration of passengers to out-of-state airports.

Initiative 14: Increase the emphasis on safety and security. In 2004, new airport terminals will be constructed in Devils Lake, Williston, and Bismarck. Dickinson undertook an expansion to house the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). TSA will develop access plans for North Dakota's 82 general aviation airports..

Initiative 16: Monitor trends in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and energy to identify potential transportation impacts and opportunities. In 2003, the Bowman Master Plan update anticipated the construction of a lignite plant near Scranton. The Beach Airport was expanded for the aerial spray loading site and to offer access to the new Medora golf course. The Washburn airport was hard-surfaced and new lighting was installed to provide better visitor access to Lewis & Clark events. An automated weather system was certified at Gwinner to accommodate medical evacuations and daily charter flights for the Bobcat manufacturing plant.

NDDOT, the ND Department of Commerce, and the ND Department of Agriculture is hosting a conference on April 5 in Bismarck. The conference is intended to develop an awareness and appreciation of the interdependence between transportation and the competitiveness of North Dakota's economy, and will include analysis of the state's four largest economic base sectors: tourism and recreation, energy, agriculture, and manufacturing.

North Dakota's Transportation Mission

North Dakota will provide a transportation system that offers personal choices, enhances business opportunities, and promotes the wise use of all resources.

North Dakota's Transportation Vision

North Dakota's transportation system is an important part of regional, national, and global systems, developed strategically to help grow and diversify the economy and enhance our quality of life.

North Dakota's Transportation Goals

- Safe and secure transportation for residents, visitors, and freight.
- A transportation system that allows optimum personal mobility.
- A transportation system that allows the efficient and effective movement of freight.
- A transportation system that enhances economic diversity, growth, and competitiveness.
- Funding sufficient to protect North Dakota's transportation investment and address future transportation needs.